

**Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and Water Reclamation Plant
Staff Report
June 20, 2001**

1. Introduction and Background

On March 23, 1999, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (the County), upon recommendation from the Regional Planning Commission (Planning Commission), certified the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) (SCH No. 95011015), and approved the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and WRP (Project No. 94-087). This action followed nine public hearings before the Planning Commission and three public hearings before the Board of Supervisors. After approval of the project, various parties challenged the County's certification of the Final EIR and approval of the Specific Plan and WRP in a consolidated action in Kern County Superior Court entitled, *United Water Conservation District v. County of Los Angeles, et al.*, Case No. 239324 RDR.

The Court upheld approval of the Specific Plan and WRP, and the FEIR certification with respect to the majority of the issues raised in the action. However, the Court did find that the FEIR required additional analysis with regard to the following six issues:

- Issue #1 Traffic impacts to Ventura County arterial roadways exiting State Routes 23 and 126;
- Issue #2 Biological impacts to the Ventura County portion of the Salt Creek wildlife corridor;
- Issue #3 Biological impacts in the Santa Clara River corridor caused by channelization and bank hardening;
- Issue #4 Consistency of the Specific Plan with the County General Plan policies requiring protection of natural resources in Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) as those standards apply to SEA 23 (Santa Clara River corridor).
- Issue #5 Adequacy of water sources for the proposed Specific Plan, including potential impacts of the Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) alternative, and consistency with the County's General Plan Development Monitoring System (DMS) policies as they relate to water supplies; and
- Issue #6 The alternative of siting the Specific Plan's Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) off-river, including an analysis of biological impacts.

Consequently, the Court set aside approval of the Specific Plan and WRP, and FEIR certification, with respect to the six issues discussed above.

In response to the decision Court,¹ the Board of Supervisors approved a resolution identifying the action to be taken by the County in order to respond to the Court's ruling. The County's Resolution (**Attachment 1**) partially set aside certification of the FEIR and land use approvals for the Specific Plan and WRP. The Resolution also instructs County staff to prepare "... an additional environmental analysis under CEQA ('Additional Analysis'). The Additional Analysis shall address each of the specific issues described in the Court's Writ and Statement of Decision[.]"

In response to the Court's decision and the Board's resolution, on April 19, 2001, County staff prepared and publicly circulated the Newhall Ranch Draft Additional Analysis to the previously certified FEIR. The public review and comment period was for 60-days commencing on April 20, 2001 to June 19, 2001. A brief description of the Specific Plan, WRP and the Draft Additional Analysis is provided below. An Executive Summary of the Draft Additional Analysis was also provided to the Commission as part of the document (see, Additional Analysis, pp. ES-1 to ES-14).

2. Project Description, Location and Function

a. Specific Plan and WRP Description and Location

The Newhall Ranch Specific Plan covers approximately 11,963 acres. The Specific Plan, as approved by the Board of Supervisors on March 23, 1999, includes 21,615 dwelling units on 4,835 acres (including an 18-hole golf course, 10 neighborhood parks and seven schools), 630 acres of mixed uses (including residential, office, and retail commercial uses), 67 acres of commercial uses, 256 acres of business park uses (including light manufacturing, warehousing and distribution), 37 acres of visitor serving uses, 6,138 acres of open area, 3 community parks on 186 acres, and 367 acres of arterial roads and community facilities (including a new 6.9 million gallon per day water reclamation plant, one library and two fire stations). The build-out of the Specific Plan is

¹ See Appendix 1.0(a) to the Additional Analysis

projected to occur over approximately 25 to 30 years, depending upon economic and market conditions and would eventually result in an on-site resident population of approximately 60,000 persons. The location of the Specific Plan area and WRP site are illustrated on **Figure 1**. The approved Newhall Ranch Land Use Plan and statistical summary are shown in **Figure 2** and **Table 1**, respectively.

b. Function of Specific Plan

The Specific Plan is a comprehensive planning document that will guide future development of the Newhall Ranch property. The document sets forth the zoning, development regulations, design guidelines, and implementation programs designed to produce a project consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Los Angeles County General Plan and Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan. Flexibility has been designed into the Specific Plan to respond to the changes in society and the marketplace that will undoubtedly occur during buildout of the community. Further, the Specific Plan establishes the regulations and standards for the protection of open areas adjacent to development and two large special resource management areas totaling approximately 6,138 acres.

The Specific Plan is also regulatory in nature and serves as zoning for the Newhall Ranch community. Subsequent development plans and subdivision maps must be consistent with both this Specific Plan and the County of Los Angeles General Plan.

3. Processing History and Previous County Actions

a. Summary of Previously Approved Entitlements

In addition to the land uses indicated above, the entitlements previously approved by the Board of Supervisors include:

- General Plan and Sub-Plan Amendments Nos. 94-087- (5),
- Zone Change No. 94-087-(5),
- Conditional Use Permit No. 94-087-(5), and
- Vesting Tentative Parcel Map No. 24500.

Figure 1
Vicinity Map

Figure 2

Newhall Ranch Specific Plan Land Use Plan

Table 1
Land Use Plan Statistical Breakdown
(Table 2.3-1 from Specific Plan)

LAND USES	Gross Acres	Dwelling Units	Second Units ¹	Land Use Overlays	Approx. Allocation
Residential:					
Estate ¹	1,326.2	423	423	10 Neighborhood Parks	50 ac
Low	744.4	671		5 Elementary Schools	35 ac
Low-Medium	1,796.9	6,000		1 Junior High School	25 ac
Medium	845.7	7,652		1 High School	45 ac
High	121.8	2,376		1 Golf Course	180 ac
Subtotal	4,835.0	17,122	423	2 Fire Stations	2 ac
Mixed-Use and Non-Residential:				1 Library	2 ac
Mixed Use ²	630.4	4,493		1 Water Reclamation Plan	15 ac
Commercial	67.2			1 Lake	15 ac
Business Park	256.3			3 Community Parks	186 ac
Visitor Serving	36.7			1 Electrical Substation	2 ac
Subtotal	990.6	4,493	0	Arterial Roads	331 ac
Major Open Areas:					
High Country SMA	4,213.8				
River Corridor SMA	818.6				
Open Area	1,105.8				
Subtotal	6,138.2	0	0		
TOTAL	11,963.8	21,615	423		
(Total Units including Second units ¹		22,038			

¹ Within each Estate lot one (1) Second Unit is eligible to be constructed with the approval of a CUP (see Second Units, Section 3.9). This may increase the total number of permitted dwelling units of 21,615 by 423, to a maximum total units of 22,038.

² Mixed-use includes commercial and residential uses.

b. Prior Environmental Impact Report Overview

As indicated above, the County prepared and certified a comprehensive Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and Water Reclamation Plant. Prior to completing the FEIR the County prepared an Initial Study and circulated it along with a Notice of Preparation (NOP) in order to receive input from interested public agencies and private parties. The Initial Study and NOP resulted in the following topics being addressed in the FEIR:

- Geotechnical and Soil Resources
- Flood
- Cultural/Paleontological Resources
- Agricultural Resources
- Environmental Safety
- Biota
- Visual Qualities
- Traffic/Access
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Water Resources
- Wastewater Disposal
- Natural Gas
- Electricity
- Solid Waste Disposal
- Education
- Police Services
- Fire Services and Hazards
- Libraries
- Parks, Recreation and Trails
- Population, Housing and Employment

In addition to these sections, other important information was incorporated as part of the FEIR. As required by CEQA, the EIR also included: (1) complete description of the existing environmental and regulatory setting that exists in the Specific Plan site's vicinity; (2) complete description of the ultimate buildout of the proposed Specific Plan and WRP (i.e., the Project Description); (3) a description and analysis of plans that could reduce the Specific Plan's and WRP's impact potential (i.e., the Alternatives section); and, (4) an analysis and summary of cumulative, long-term, and irreversible effects associated with the proposed Specific Plan and WRP.

With the exception of the six issues indicated by the Court, the County's decision to certify the adequacy of the FEIR was left intact by the Court.

c. Changes/additions imposed through the hearing process

Significant changes or additions to the applicant's original proposal imposed through the hearing process by either the Regional Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors included:

- Provisions for dedication of the High Country;
- Construction of the High Country trail;
- Discretionary approval requirement of all Second Units;
- Inclusion of a mandatory affordable housing program;
- Buried river bank stabilization;
- Inclusion of a wider buffer along the Santa Clara River;
- Development standards for view protection of the River and bluffs;
- Contour grading and ridge line protection as proposed by the City of Santa Clarita;
- Additional provisions to protect groundwater supply;
- Requirement for fully improved parks and provision of Library and Fire facilities;
- Inclusion of Val Verde, School District and City agreements;
- 253 acre increase in major open areas (primarily in the Salt Creek area); and
- Reduction in the project by 3,603 homes.

4. Draft Additional Analysis

a. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Draft Additional Analysis to the previously certified FEIR is to address the six issues, which the Court determined required additional study and analysis.

Prior to public distribution of the Additional Analysis, sections on each of the six issues indicated above (except those relating to traffic and water supply) were provided to the Los Angeles County Significant Ecological Area Technical Advisory Committee (SEATAC) for review. Changes were made to the draft analysis based on SEATAC's review prior to public distribution of the Additional Analysis. In addition, other County departments reviewed the Additional Analysis and those comments were incorporated prior to distribution.

b. Summary of Analysis of Court's Six Issues

Issue #1 - Traffic on Ventura County Arterials exiting SR-126 and SR-23

The Court ordered that the County “[e]xtend the traffic impact analysis used to evaluate the project’s traffic impacts in Los Angeles County to the analysis of the Project’s impacts on arterial roadways in Ventura County until the 1 percent impact standard is reached.”

In response, the Additional Analysis includes a special analysis that extends the study using the 1 percent threshold criteria to Ventura County. The results of the analysis contained in **Section 2.1** of the Additional Analysis is summarized in **Table 2** and demonstrates that the Specific Plan will not have a significant impact on any Ventura County arterial roadways exiting SR-126 or SR-23. Therefore, the Specific Plan will not result in significant impacts to any arterial roads in Ventura County and no mitigation beyond that identified in the Final EIR is required (see **Additional Analysis Section 4.0** for a copy of the Mitigation Monitoring Program).

It should be noted that since the time the original case was approved, Ventura County now has a traffic model capable of predicting the impacts of the traffic generated by the Specific Plan. This new model was utilized in the Additional Analysis. Since a long-range model was not available for Ventura County previously, the original analysis was designed to be very conservative in predicting impacts. The Additional Analysis now confirms that the original analysis was conservative and actually overstated the amount of traffic that would affect Ventura County. The Ventura County Transportation Commission staff has reviewed the analysis presented in the Additional Analysis, and has indicated their concurrence with the significance conclusions reached (see, letter, dated October 4, 2000, in **Additional Analysis Appendix 2.1(a)**).

Table 2
2020 ADT Level of Service Summary - Ventura County Roadways

Roadway	Limits	Lane:	Class	2020 ADT	NR Incr. Amt.	(%)	2020 V/C (LOS "D")		2020 V/C (LOS "E")	
							Cap.*	V/C	Cap. *	V/C
Balcom Canyon Rd	South Mountain Rd to Bradley Rd	2	III	1,000	0	(0%)	5,900	.17	16,000	.06
Bardsdale Rd	Sespe to Grimes Canyon	2	II	2,000	3	(.1%)	11,000	.18	21,000	.10
Bradley Rd	Balcom Canyon Road to Los Angeles Ave	2	II	2,000	0	(0%)	11,000	.18	21,000	.10
Briggs Rd	Foothill to Santa Paula Fwy	2	II	3,000	0	(0%)	11,000	.18	21,000	.10
Grimes Canyon Rd	Broadway to Los Angeles Ave (SR-118)	2	III	2,000	14	(.7%)	5,900	.34	16,000	.13
Guiberson Rd	Chambersburg Rd to SR-126	2	II	3,000	0	(0%)	11,000	.27	21,000	.14
Main St (Piru)	Telegraph Rd (SR-126) to Center St	2	II	5,000	24	(.4%)	11,000	.45	21,000	.24
Old Telegraph Rd	Telegraph Rd (SR-126) to Fillmore city limit	2	II	5,000	0	(0%)	11,000	.45	21,000	.24
Sespe St/Pasadena Ave	South Mountain Rd to Chambersburg Rd (SR-23)	2	II	1,000	0	(0%)	11,000	.17	21,000	.05
South Mountain Rd	Santa Paula city limit to Sespe St	2	II	2,000	3	(.1%)	11,000	.18	21,000	.10
Stockton Rd	Balcom Canyon Rd to Broadway	2	II	2,000	4	(.2%)	11,000	.18	21,000	.10
Telegraph Rd	Ventura city limit to Santa Paula city limit	2	I	8,000	8	(.1%)	16,000	.50	27,000	.30

Abbreviations: NR = Newhall Ranch; Incr. Amt. = increment amount; SR = State Route; ADT = average daily traffic; LOS = level of service; V/C = volume to capacity ratio; % = percentage increase in traffic volumes due to Specific Plan.

Issue #2 - Salt Creek Corridor

The Court ordered that the County “...*determine the effect on that portion of the Salt Creek corridor situated in Ventura County caused by the shifting of wildlife into the Salt Creek Corridor.*”

The Salt Creek Corridor is located at the westerly edge of the Specific Plan as shown in **Figure 3**. In response to the Court’s order, additional mapping of the portion of the Salt Creek watershed was conducted and approximately 20 field studies documented how wildlife use the corridor. The Additional Analysis found that the Salt Creek wildlife population will be stable in both counties, as 96 percent of the existing watershed will not be impacted. The Specific Plan will build out over a 25 to 30 year period. Consequently, the displacement of wildlife would occur incrementally over an extended period of time. The Additional Analysis confirms the original findings and analysis contained in the FEIR to the effect that the Specific Plan would not significantly affect wildlife movement in the Salt Creek Corridor.

As previously noted, the Specific Plan does not propose to develop any property in the Ventura County portion of the Salt Creek corridor. In fact, within Los Angeles County, the only development proposed in the Salt Creek watershed is for Visitor Serving uses, intended to control public access to the High Country. Also, as part of the original approval of the Specific Plan, the Board of Supervisors established a one-half mile wide buffer south of the Santa Clara River.

Since FEIR certification, the portion of the Salt Creek Corridor within Ventura County is now also protected from development by several existing Ventura County land use policies and initiatives including:

- The Ventura County “SOAR” initiative, which requires a vote of the people before development in the Ventura County Salt Creek area could be approved; and
- The Fillmore/Piru Greenbelt covers the Salt Creek watershed in Ventura County and promotes open space conservation.

In addition, no projects are presently proposed in Ventura County that are near enough to impact Salt Creek Corridor.

See **Section 2.2** of the Additional Analysis for further information on this topic.

Issue #3 - Floodplain Modifications

The Court ordered that the County “...address the issue of the project’s adverse impacts on the biological resources of the Santa Clara River Corridor associated with channelization and bank hardening.”

The Specific Plan proposes buried bank stabilization and bridge abutments as shown in **Figure 4**. **Figure 5** shows an example of the buried bank stabilization cross section and a picture of the recently installed buried stabilization in nearby Valencia, in contrast with the historic concrete river abutment treatment. The Additional Analysis utilizes modeling programs developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to predict the pre- and post-development river depths and velocities for various storm events and where flooding would occur under both. This data was then mapped utilizing Geographic Information System technology, which allowed the data to be overlaid on recent vegetation and species mapping.

Through this analysis, the potential impacts of the bank stabilization and bridges on biological resources were quantified and assessed. The Additional Analysis concludes that post-development flow depths and velocities would be insufficient to alter the amount, location, and nature of the aquatic and riparian habitats in the Specific Plan area and downstream in Ventura County.

Under the Specific Plan Land Use Plan, Resource Management Plan, and its Drainage and Flood Control Plan (pp. 2-71 of the Specific Plan) the river width and proposed drainage improvements have been located and designed to maintain the key hydraulic characteristics that largely determine the overall mosaic of habitats in the river. For high frequency floods (2-year, 5-year, and 10-year), the proposed floodplain modifications would not hinder flows or reduce the floodplain area. Instead, these flows would spread across the river channel, unaffected by the bank protection, because the river would have sufficient width to allow these flows to meander and spread out further than they would under pre-project conditions.

Figure 4

Locations of Proposed Bank Stabilization and Bridges

Figure 5
Bank Stabilization Concept

It is only during more infrequent floods (20-year, 50-year and 100-year events) where flows would spread out to the buried bank stabilization. This would limit the area of the floodplain during these infrequent flood events, causing inundation over a smaller area because the bank protection would prevent flooding of formerly adjacent floodplain areas. However, the reduction in floodplain area caused by bank protection does not create a significant increase in overall velocities or water depth, because the volume of flow carried in these shallow, slow-moving areas along the margins of the river is small. Moreover, variations are localized and limited in scope, especially when viewed in the entirety of the river corridor within the Specific Plan site and downstream.

Issue #4 - SEA General Plan Consistency

The Court ordered that the County “...take action to ensure that the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan is consistent with the General Plan policies of Los Angeles County requiring protection of natural resources in SEAs as those policies apply to SEA 23...)

The Court found that the FEIR did not adequately address the Specific Plan's impacts on sensitive habitat in the Santa Clara River Significant Ecological Area (SEA) 23 (also described in the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan as the “River Corridor Special Management Area”). The Court also found that the County's findings regarding the deletion of 103 acres of highly sensitive habitat from SEA 23 were not supported by substantial evidence. Finally, the Court found that there was not substantial evidence on the record to justify the County's findings that development, including bridge crossings and utilities, was located and designed so as not to conflict with critical resources, habitat areas or migratory paths within SEA 23.

SEA 23 was created in consideration of the resource values present in the Santa Clara River corridor.² The value of SEA 23 is derived from the riparian habitats and associated species located within its boundaries, and the function of SEA 23 as a regional wildlife corridor. The Santa Clara River was selected for SEA classification primarily because of the presence of habitat for the unarmored threespine stickleback, a state and federally listed endangered species.

² See, General Plan Background Report, p. OS-A-30-A31.

The General Plan does not preclude development in SEAs, but rather recognizes the value of sensitive resources and the constraints imposed by competing public needs. Various goals and policies reflect this intent including a procedure for evaluating development proposed within an SEA. The General Plan first sets forth land uses and activities that are considered compatible with SEAs by definition.³ The General Plan notes that it “has not attempted to identify, in other than the most general terms, appropriate use types and intensities within significant ecological areas.”⁴ Therefore, in order to determine whether a development proposal, in fact, is compatible with a particular SEA, the General Plan requires that the proposal be reviewed for compliance with certain “design compatibility criteria.” The design criteria are as follows:

- (a) The development is designed to be highly compatible with biotic resources present;
- (b) The development is designed to maintain waterbodies, watercourses, and their tributaries in a natural state;
- (c) The development is designed so that wildlife movement corridors (migratory paths) are left in a natural and undisturbed state;
- (d) The development retains sufficient natural vegetative cover and/or open spaces to buffer critical resource areas from the proposed use;
- (e) Where necessary, fences or walls are provided to buffer important habitat areas from development; and
- (f) Roads and utilities serving the proposed development are located and designed so as not to conflict with critical resources, habitat areas or migratory paths.⁵

³ Those uses include regulated scientific study, passive recreation, such as wildlife observation and photography, limited picnicking, riding and hiking, and overnight camping. The General Plan also describes several more intensive land use types that may be compatible with the SEA classification, “as determined by a detailed biotic survey and such conditions as may be necessary to ensure protection of identified ecological resources.” Such uses include: (i) Residential uses at compatible densities; (ii) Minor commercial uses; (iii) Public uses essential to the maintenance or public health, safety and welfare, where no alternative sites are feasible; (iv) Compatible agricultural uses; and (v) Compatible extractive uses, including oil and gas recovery, and rock, sand and gravel quarrying.

⁴ See, General Plan Background Report, p. LU-18.

⁵ See, General Plan, p. LU-A13. See also, General Plan Background Report, p. LU-31.

Presently, approximately 1,290 acres are located within the existing SEA 23 boundaries on the Specific Plan site. The Specific Plan proposes changes to SEA 23 (both additions and subtractions) resulting in a net reduction of land area of 471 acres within the existing SEA 23 boundaries. The primary purpose of the change is to create an SEA boundary within the Specific Plan that more accurately reflects the biological resources present on the site. The revised SEA 23 area within the Specific Plan would contain approximately 819 acres. **Figure 6** represents the existing SEA boundary and the proposed SEA boundary. The Specific Plan also proposed, however, that the resultant SEA area, also known as the River Corridor Special Management Area (SMA), be permanently protected and dedicated to a non-profit entity, which would maintain the area and actively manage the land with an endowment established by the applicant.

The proposed changes to the SEA area must be understood in context. In this case, a relatively small amount of sensitive habitat area (i.e., 28 acres, or 2 percent of the existing SEA 23) is being removed from the existing boundaries of SEA 23 due to proposed development. The balance of the land transferred from SEA 23 (443 acres) will be either placed in other permanently preserved open area designations (i.e., SEA 20, Open Area) because it is not riparian in nature, or is proposed for development on land that is, for the most part, farm fields or already disturbed. In addition to the land proposed to be removed, a total of 59 acres of land is proposed to be added to SEA 23. The transfers are proposed with consideration to the type and quality of the habitat and the purpose of the SEA 23 (preservation of riparian habitats and associated species).

Table 3 provides a summary of the proposed changes to the existing SEA 23 boundaries.

Figure 6

Existing and Proposed SEA 23 Boundary

Table 3
Proposed Changes to SEA 23

Existing SEA 23		Preserved Elsewhere in Specific Plan	Added to SEA 23	Removed for Development	Percent of Total Existing SEA 23 Removed	Revised SEA 23
Habitat	Acreage					
Sensitive⁶	380	89	14	28	2.2%	277
Non-Sensitive	444	27	13	19	1.5%	411
Ag/Disturbed	466	30	32	337	26.1%	131
Total	1,290	146	59	384	29.0%	819

On a related note, if the Commission adopts the new On-site Alternative with reduced habitat impacts for the WRP as recommended by County staff, an additional 5.5 acres of sensitive habitats can be avoided. (See discussion Under Issue #6 – Water Reclamation Plant Alternatives for more information.)

The Additional Analysis concludes that the three proposed bridge crossing locations are essential for the safe and adequate circulation of traffic for the Specific Plan and the region. A series of bridge alignment and bridge span alternatives were considered prior to selecting the proposed bridge alignments and designs. Each bridge complies with County engineering requirements and is strategically located and designed to provide maximum transportation effectiveness while minimizing the need for utility crossings⁷ and impacts upon critical resources, habitat areas and animal movement paths in the riparian corridor.

⁶ The 103 acres of sensitive habitat to be removed from SEA 23, to which the court order refers, is represented here in this table as the net result of adding 14 acres of sensitive habitat and subtracting 89 acres to be transferred to other open area designations and 28 acres which is proposed to be impacted by development.

⁷ Two utility crossings are still required in order to adequately serve the Specific Plan.

SEA Summary

The approved Land Use Plan of the Specific Plan has been designed to minimally impact sensitive resources, and where avoidance is not possible, to minimize impacts where feasible. A total of 380 acres of sensitive habitat areas exist within SEA 23; 28 acres (or 7 percent of sensitive habitat areas and 2 percent of the original SEA) would be directly impacted by development. The remainder would remain protected in open areas as part of the revised SEA 23, SEA 20 or within the Open Area designations. This is consistent with criteria one that requires the setting aside of appropriate and sufficient undisturbed area. Development on land already disturbed poses no direct impacts to resources found within the SEA. Of the 28 acres of sensitive habitat removed by development in the SEA, 20 acres of sensitive riparian habitat is being removed to accommodate residential, commercial or mixed land uses. As discussed above, the affected land represents small patches of disconnected habitat distributed throughout the Specific Plan area rather than a contiguous patch of 28 acres that provides higher habitat value. Based on the analysis presented in **Section 2.4**, the Additional Analysis concludes that Specific Plan is compatible with the sensitive resources found within SEA 23.

For a complete discussion on this topic, please refer to **Section 2.4** of the Additional Analysis.

Issue #5 - Water Resources

The Court ordered that the County “...*demonstrate that adequate water sources will be available for build-out of the Project, which may be achieved by securing other water sources consistent with CEQA and/or by developing a factual basis providing substantial evidence from which the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors can adequately assess environmental impacts of the employment of the ASR alternative and its ability to meet water needs.*”

The applicant has taken several actions in order to demonstrate that water will be available for the Specific Plan. The Additional Analysis analyzed the demands of the Specific Plan and identified sources of supply under both normal/average conditions as well as dry year conditions. The analysis concludes that there is an

adequate supply of water available to meet the demands of the Specific Plan without creating significant environmental impacts.

In addition, the applicant conducted a test of the Saugus Groundwater Banking/Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) program and developed a groundwater model, which confirm that the Saugus Groundwater Banking/ASR Program is feasible. The Additional Analysis also concludes that there would be no significant impacts resulting from the ASR program. Furthermore, the Additional Analysis concludes that the Specific Plan is consistent with the County's General Plan DMS policies as they relate to water and that more than enough water is available to meet the Specific Plan's projected demand. For additional information on the DMS analysis, please see **Additional Analysis Section 2.5, Water Resources, Subsection 2.5.5.4(a)(1)** entitled "**DMS General Plan Consistency**").

To demonstrate that adequate water is available for the Specific Plan, the Specific Plan will rely on the following sources of water:

(a) Newhall Ranch Water Supplies

- **Existing Newhall Agricultural Water** – The applicant would meet potable water demands of the Specific Plan by using Newhall's historical supply of alluvial groundwater produced in Los Angeles County which is presently committed to agriculture. No additional groundwater would be pumped over historical and present amounts; instead, the water presently used to irrigate crops would be treated and then used to partially meet the potable water needs of the Specific Plan.
- **CLWA SWP Supplies** – A small portion of the Castaic Lake Water Agency's (CLWA's) existing imported State Water Project (SWP) Table A water entitlement will be used to meet the remainder of the Specific Plan's potable water need. CLWA's SWP entitlement is 95,200 acre-feet per year. Newhall Ranch would require about 1.7 to 2.6 percent of that existing entitlement.
- **Newhall Ranch Reclaimed Water** – Reclaimed water from the Specific Plan's water reclamation plant will be used to meet the majority of the Specific Plan's non-potable water need.

- **CLWA Reclaimed Water** - Planned recycled water from the Valley's two existing water reclamation plants will be used to meet the remainder of the Specific Plan's non-potable water need.

(b) Supplemental Water Supplies

Even though enough water already exists to meet the needs of the Specific Plan, the applicant has taken the following actions in order to enhance the reliability of Specific Plan water supplies:

- **Newhall/SWP Water** – The applicant has secured water rights under contract from landowners served by a member agency of the Kern County Water Agency.
- **Semitropic Groundwater Banking Project** - The applicant has purchased groundwater storage capacity in the Semitropic Groundwater Bank, located in Kern County, for depositing water during average/normal and wet years which would then be available for use in dry years.
- **Saugus Groundwater Banking/ASR Program** - In dry years, the applicant will utilize water stored in the proposed Saugus Groundwater Bank (also termed Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)) during normal and wet years.
- **Castaic Creek Flood Flows** – Subject to approval by the State Department of Water Resources (DWR), Castaic Creek flood flows could be used in wet and normal/average years, when available, as a water source for the Semitropic Groundwater Banking Project (through water transfers) and the Saugus Groundwater Banking/ASR Program. This supply source is variable; in drier years, the flood flows are not available.
- **CLWA SWP and Other Supplies** – When available in wet and normal/average years, excess CLWA SWP water and other supplies available to CLWA could be used in addition to Newhall/SWP water and Castaic Creek flood flows as a source of water for storage in the Semitropic Groundwater Banking Project (through water transfers) and the Saugus Groundwater Banking/ASR Program.

Table 4 and **Chart 1** represent a summary of the Specific Plan's water demands and supply in normal/average years as well as in dry years. **Chart 2** represents the Current DMS Buildout Scenario and **Chart 3** represents a 2045 projection of demand and supply for the Santa Clarita Valley.

Table 4
Newhall Ranch Water Supplies

(all figures are acre feet per year)

	<i>Normal/Average Year</i>		<i>Dry Year</i>	
	<u>Demand</u>	<u>Supply</u>	<u>Demand</u>	<u>Supply</u>
<i>Potable</i>	8,645	--	9,510	--
Newhall Agricultural Water	--	7,038	--	7,038
CLWA SWP Supplies	--	1,607	--	2,472
<i>Non-Potable</i>	9,035	--	9,939	--
Newhall Ranch Reclaimed Water	--	5,344	--	5,344
CLWA Reclaimed Water	--	<u>3,691</u>	--	<u>4,595</u>
Total	<u>17,680</u>	<u>17,680</u>	<u>19,449</u>	<u>19,449</u>

In addition to the supplies noted above, the following supplemental supplies have been identified to enhance the reliability of the water for the Specific Plan.

(all figures are acre feet per year)

	<i>Normal/Average Year</i>		<i>Dry Year</i>	
	<u>Demand</u>	<u>Supply</u>	<u>Demand</u>	<u>Supply</u>
Saugus Groundwater Banking/ ASR Program	4,500	--	--	4,100
CLWA SWP and Other Supplies	--	4,500	--	--
Newhall/SWP Water	--	4,566	--	3,044
Castaic Creek Flood Flows	--	7,043	--	--
Semitropic Groundwater Banking Project	--	--	--	<u>4,950</u>
Total	<u>4,500</u>	<u>16,109</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>12,094</u>
Net Additional Supplies Available with Supplemental Programs	<u>11,609 to 16,109⁸</u>		<u>12,094</u>	

⁸ It is anticipated that the water would be banked in an average or normal year as the water is not shown to be needed locally. However, depending on whether the CLWA SWP and Other Supplies is banked in a particular year this water is either available locally in the same year or banked for future use. Therefore, the Net Amount of Additional Supplies Available is shown as a range.

Newhall Ranch Water Demand vs. Supply

Current DMS Buildout Scenario Water Demand vs. Supply

Chart 3
Santa Clarita Valley Cumulative Buildout Scenario
Water Demand vs. Supply Full Buildout (2045)

The surplus of water created by existing water sources and the actions of the applicant will ensure an adequate supply of water for the Specific Plan without creating significant impacts on existing water supplies or downstream water users. The Additional Analysis also concludes that that the Development Monitoring System requirements and policies are also satisfied by this analysis.

For additional information on this topic, please see **Additional Analysis Section 2.5, Water Resources**.

Issue #6 - Water Reclamation Plant Alternatives

The Court ordered that the County *“address the alternative of siting the Project’s Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) off-river, including an analysis of the biological impacts of that siting.”*

The Additional Analysis complies with the Court’s direction by studying the environmental impacts of the off-river alternative to the proposed location of the WRP. A new alternative near the proposed on-river site, but adjusted to reduce impacts on sensitive habitat was also studied. **Figure 7** illustrates the location of the alternative WRP sites and the originally proposed WRP site.

An alternatives matrix was prepared to compare the degree of impact of each alternative by environmental category. The Additional Analysis concludes that the new alternative proposed by the applicant is the environmentally superior alternative by avoiding permanent impacts to 5.5 acres of sensitive and non-sensitive stream and riverbed habitats and by better addressing the siting criteria for the WRP.

Figure 7
Alternative WRP Locations
